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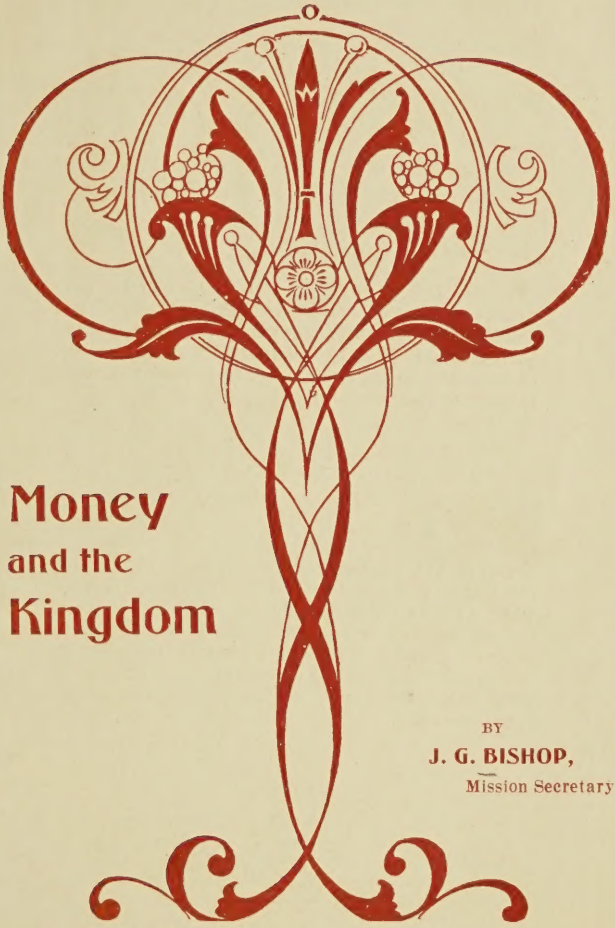

Money and the Kingdom

BY
J. G. BISHOP,
Mission Secretary

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Duty Enjoined.

If thou forbear to deliver *them that are* drawn unto death, and *those that are* ready to be slain; if thou sayest, Behold we knew it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider *it?* and he that keepeth thy soul, doth *not* he know *it?* and shall *not* he render to *every* man according to his works?—*Prov. 24: 11, 12.*

A Prayer.

Our Father, wilt thou beget within us thy children the same mind tnat was in Christ Jesus Thy Son, that we may not regard the things which we possess as our own, but holding them only as Thy stewards, may be always ready to part with whatever Thy glory, the needs of Thy church and the world may require, ever seeking to honor Thee with our substance and the firstfruits of all our increase.—AMEN.

Money and the Kingdom

BY J. G. BISHOP, D. D.

"*Money answereth all things.*—Eccl. 10:19.

MONEY, under the terms, Money Gold, Silver, Talents, Shekel, Penny, is found recorded in the Bible a little more than *one thousand times.* Twice as much is said in the Bible about money than is said about either prayer or faith.

Men, even professed Christian men, will talk glibly, and as a matter-of-course thing, about their business and their money all the week, and on Sunday before the sermon and after the sermon, but if the preacher happens to speak of money *in* the sermon he is accused of being sordid, mercenary, selfish, looking after his own interest. And because of these criticisms, in part at least, preachers are almost dumb on the subject and the people grope in ignorance of their duty, the home church and missionary work is crippled and souls perish. As preachers and churches, we *must* get over our indifference and squeamishness on this subject.

We do not believe and hence do not say that money is the most important question relating to the great work of world-evangelization. The supreme love of God, and the indwelling

of the Holy Spirit—the "enduement with power from on high"—must ever be recognized as standing first among the agencies for missionary, as well as for all Christian work. But money has its place, in relation to the Kingdom.

"Money," said the wise man,"answereth all things." He was right. All business in life, whether secular or religious, Christian or heathen, in this and in every other country, is carried on by money, or by what represents money, exchange of some kind. Not but that other elements enter into the account, but money is the principal factor.

A Definition

One good definition of money is that given by Dr. A. F. Shaufler, that is, "Money is myself." His illustration condensely stated, is this: As a laborer with the pick-axe, I earn $12.00 in the week; as an intelligent salesman, $20.00; as a manager of a large business which requires much brain power, $100.00. Saturday evening, I put this money in my pocket; it is so much of my physical or mental energy, so much of myself, stored in my pocket. Then this money is not merely silver or gold, but it is something akin to *human*, something instinct with power expended. But, like electricity, it is stored power. And, like electricity, capable of doing marvels when loosened. With it I may light my house, run my machinery, talk with my neighbors,

send my message to a distant land, or *electrocute the culprit in the felon's chair.*

Yes, money is power. The more money a man has, the more power he has, for good or for evil. With it he can bless and save life, or with it he can curse and destroy life.

Life Power in Money

Have you ever seriously considered that money contains *life* power? You cannot eat, drink or wear this silver dollar. You would starve if you had nothing but silver dollars; and yet without dollars, or what they represent, you would starve. There is a famine and you are dying with hunger. With this dollar I send you twenty loaves of bread which sustains your life for a month. Temporal life for a whole month in that cold silver dollar—when transmuted into bread.

More: there is spiritual-life, soul-life, in money. Money cannot forgive sins and cleanse the soul, that is true. God must forgive, the blood of Christ cleanse, and new life be imparted by the power of the Holy Spirit. But God has so planned, in His economy,—and it is not for us to question the wisdom or goodness of God's plans—that man to be saved must be made acquainted with and brought into touch with the gospel, and that through human agencies and temporal means this is to be done, and *money is one of the means.* So far as known, the salvation of every person, who is saved, costs money. To

print and circulate Bibles, build churches, sustain pastors, evangelists and missionaries, costs money; every religious service costs some person some money; yes, your salvation and mine, as well as the converted heathen, is in part some person's money transmuted into life; life here and now, and the blessed hope of eternal life by and by.

Illustration

Now, don't forget it, I pray you, this potentially important fact—of the life-giving power of money. Have I made it plain? If not, consider a moment further: By the directions of the Mission Board, Rev. and Mrs. Fry commenced work last January in Utsunomiya, Japan, a city of 40,000 pagan idolaters, with no knowledge of the true God and the way of life. Already, within nine months, several have been converted—which our money made possible—and the foundations of a Christian Church are laid. But within an hour's ride of Utsunomiya, is another city of 20,000, and several villages of 5,000 to 8,000 heathen with not a minister or gospel teacher in them. The meanwhile the Frys and all our few missionaries there have but just so much strength and but twenty-four hours in the day, and these are already *full to their limit*. Some church or individual, consecrates a thousand of these silver dollars, so much of his own stored up power, a new missionary can be sent, the lines extended, this city of 20,000 with its

villages can be taken in, Christ lifted up on the pole of the gospel and other souls—our brothers and sisters—will look and be healed, be made alive in Christ Jesus. The money given, souls are saved, the money withheld, these same souls die without Christ. They perish in their sins. Who shares in the responsibility?

How sacred, how *almost divine* is money, and what a responsibility attaches to money when we consider its wonderful multiplying and transforming power; when it can, if properly used, be made to *save life*, to SAVE SOULS!

Is it any wonder then that God has in every age indissolubly linked money with the spiritual interests of His Kingdom? Cain and Able's sacrifice cost a money value, the "fruit of the ground," and "firstlings of the flock." *Firstlings of the flock*, bear in mind! And so of every sacrifice from Able to Christ, yea, of every dispensation. The building of the Tabernacle in the wilderness, and the Temple at Jerusalem; the service of the Levites and the priesthood were supported by money—or its equivalent. And no less is this true that God's ministers and His service under the Christian dispensation—in this country, in every country—are all to be supported by money, or its equivalent. God has ordered it so; has commanded it to be done; has enunciated general principles or laid down specified rules by which it is to be done; and has enforced these rules or laws by penalties that are just

as sure to follow as that sin produces death and that obedience leads to life.

There are some questions, practical in their nature, in regard to our relation to money and money's relation to the Kingdom—of God's requirements and our obligations—that we need to consider.

Man but a Tenant at Will

You own a farm for which you have a clear title, free from all encumberance. You say it is yours. Yes, but not absolutely. Back of your title the government still and always holds an allodial right in your farm. Based upon this right, the state levies her taxes. Hers is the first claim, which must be paid before you take out even your own living. Suppose you demur and refuse to recognize and pay the government's claim. You then find that notwithstanding your "warrantee deed," your farm is sold and transferred to another, and you must go elsewhere.

We go a step further. Even as to our persons, we are not supremely our own. We dare not say we have the right to do as we please, unless we please to do right. If we choose to do wrong, commit crimes, we are apprehended, taken by force from our home, from our family, placed in irons, or behind prison walls and bars; and if the crime was malignant enough, our life itself is taken. We are compelled to recognize the government's prior

claim to our property, our personal liberty, and our life.

God's Claim First

Back of and superior to the claim of any human government, is the claim of the Divine Government, God's claim.

And what is God's claim, both as to ourselves and what we call ours, as to the material things of this world? Let God in His word answer: "The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine, saith the Lord." (Hag. 2:8.) "Every beast of the forest is Mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills; the fowls of the mountains and the wild beasts of the field are Mine: the world is Mine and the fulness thereof." (Ps. 50:10-12.) "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof." (Ps. 24:1.)

King David recognized God's claim to *entire* ownership. After referring to the munificent offerings that he and his people had made for the building of the Temple, in his prayer of thanksgiving he says: "All that is in heaven and in the earth is Thine, O Lord. Both riches and honor come of Thee. All things come of Thee, and of Thine own have we given Thee." (1 Chron. 29:11-14.) This truth was recognized also by the apostolic Christians: "Neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own." (Acts 4:30.) As to God's ownership in us personally: "Behold, all souls are Mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the

son is Mine," (Ezek. 18:4.) "Ye are not your own; for ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." (1 Cor. 6:19-20.)

Things We Should Remember

Thus far we have found some facts in relation to money, of the relation in which God has placed money to His spiritual kingdom in this world. Now let the following facts be *settled* and *fixed* in our minds in reference to this subject:

First, That money is stored up power. That there inheres in money the power to save life or to destroy life, to save souls or allow souls to be lost! And hence, a solemn responsibility rests upon every person for a proper use of every dollar he possesses.

Second, That God is the first and absolute owner of all that man possesses; of all that you and I possess, whether of time, talents, money, houses, lands, bank stock, mining or R. R. stocks, oil wells or gas fields,—all is the Lord's .

Third, That which He has committed to us, we possess only as stewards, for the faithful use and proper returns of which He holds us responsible; and that He has the right to require of us as His stewards, in the way of tithes, offerings or otherwise, as He sees is just and as His cause may demand.

From the Sermon on the Mount, to the parable of the Judgment, the teachings of Jesus

abound in comments and commands relating to money. Among all the forms of evil, the love of money is singled out as radically antagonistic to the worship of God. Riches are personified under the name of Mammon, and we are warned that we cannot serve God and Mammon. Men should do business as laborers in the Lord's vineyard, as holders and users of His trust funds in talents, pounds, and dollars. Most men do business for themselves. They run stores, farms, factories, oil and gas wells and railroads for themselves. God and His claims are not considered though He furnishes everything—the soil, the mines, the wells, the rain, the air, the sunlight—while they either make no returns at all or render to Him the pence while they hold on to the pounds. Rather should we enquire, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" "What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits to me?" If we are sincere in this inquiry and will turn to His word, He will answer our inquiries.

How Much Owest Thou?

We must ever remember that we "are not our own," that both we and what we call ours are the Lord's, and that "when the Lord of the vineyard returns He will require '*His own with usury.*'" Let us now inquire as to the "usury;" what returns the Lord requires for the use of His own.

Very early in the world's recorded history we find that Abraham "gave tithes of all to Melchizedek, priest of the Most High God." (Gen. 14:19-20; Heb. 7:4.) Jacob made a vow to the Lord, saying, "Of all that Thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto Thee." (Gen. 28:22.) Four hundred years after Abraham and Isaac, Jehovah, in giving His law to Moses, includes the tithe and enforces it as a command, saying: "All the tithe of the land whether of the seed of the land, or the fruit of the tree, or of the herd of the flock, is the Lord's, it shall be holy unto the Lord." Immediately following, the record says, "These are the commandments which the Lord commanded Moses for the children of Israel."

The tenth was not all that the Jew's religion required him to give. To it were to be added his peace offerings, his burnt offerings, his free-will offerings and sacrifices, which doubtless in some cases, reached as much as one-fifth or even one-third of his income, but the tithe was a specific requirement, binding equally upon all, even upon the Levites, though they themselves received tithes.

The tithes were sometimes withheld by God's ancient people, just as God's dues are so often withheld by His people to-day. But to thus withhold was a sin of such a heinous character as to be characterized as robbery. This was one of the last sins mentioned in the

Old Testament. Hear Malachi: "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed Me. But ye say, wherein have we robbed Thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed Me, even this whole nation." Think of it, a whole nation of robbers!

God then admonishes to bring in the tithes, and encourages with promises of His blessing, saying: "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, and prove Me now herewith, saith the Lord of Hosts, if I will not open you the windows of Heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it." (Mal. 3:8-10.) The system of tithing seems to be as old as the race, as we may learn from both sacred and secular history. Like the law of the Sabbath, it antedates the law of Moses, was incorporated by positive enactments in the law of Moses, and like the Sabbath, succeeds the law of Moses.

In the New Testament

That the custom prevailed in the New Testament times is evident by the references to it. Even the Pharisee said he "paid tithes of all he possessed." Of course that of itself will not secure salvation if the spirit is proud and haughty. But Christ Himself, in referring to tithe-giving, says, "These ye ought to have done and not to leave the other undone," (Luke 11:42), thus approving the custom in these strong terms—"YE OUGHT." I doubt not that Paul had this custom in mind when he

gave his orders to the churches of Galatia and Corinth: "Now concerning the collection for the saints"—mind you this was not for the pastor's salary, to buy an organ, or some new song books; the plan I think may be all right for those things, but this collection was for missions, to *send away*—"as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye, upon the first day of the week let *every one of you lay* by him in store, AS GOD HATH PROSPERED him, that there be no gatherings when I come." (1 Cor. 16:1-2.)

Note these points: (1) "Upon the first day of the week"—here is system, order; not haphazzard, once or twice a year. (2) "*Every one* of you lay by him in store." (3) "*As* God hath prospered him." Here is proportionate giving. We have found one proportion that has been practiced by some we know from the days of Abraham to the present. God authorized, Bible-taught, the tithe. The Hebrew Christians were accustomed to tithe-giving; they knew what Paul meant in the above quotation.

What Does It Mean?

But just what do you mean by the tithe, do you ask? It is this: That you strictly set aside each week the first one-tenth of your income from wages, salary, profits, rents, interest, dividends, inheritance, or other sources, balance your tithe book, and religiously pay into the Lord's treasury. To the laboring man

on salary, it is one-tenth of his gross income. To the business man, merchant, manufacturer, farmer, it is one-tenth of profits after deducting cost of employed labor, etc., in production. It requires of course, that one sharpen pencil and keep an account with the Lord. This is of first importance. You may think you are paying a tenth, but how can you know unless you keep a strict account?

The tithe should be the *minimum*. Every person, rich or poor, *can* give one-tenth, and, as I understand God's teachings, should give it. This is a debt he justly owes to God. Then he may make his free-will offerings, his voluntary contributions, it may be two tithes, a third, a half, as Zacheus gave, or even more, as some have given.

Open An Account With the Lord

Possibly if some who read this that have not done so would open an account with the Lord, on one side put down one tenth of their income from all sources for the last year, and on the other side put down every cent they have expended for the Lord's cause at home and abroad, and strike a balance, they would find themselves heavily in debt to the Lord. If so, had you not better set about paying it as strictly and honestly as you would pay your taxes, or pay a note at the bank? It is right to render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's—and unto God the things that are God's. If, as a church, we would all do this,

how the money would flow into our church and missionary treasuries!

No money is to be spent for luxury or even necessity, 'til God has His "first fruits" out of it. Do other men have claims upon us for debt? God has the first claim—is the preferred creditor, or should be. While He may not sue or cast us into prison for debt, He will bring us to judgment, and the "books will be opened." Let us be careful lest there be a balance against us then!

As our taxes are an acknowledgment of our allegiance to the governments of this world, so our tithes are an expression of our loyalty to God's kingdom. We may feel that we cannot afford to pay a tenth of our income, but all Christian experience will witness that we cannot afford to disobey God or alter his plans. Besides, the thousands of tithe-givers, both rich and poor, testify that they *can* thus obey God's order, and that they enjoy His blessings in so doing.

Wrong Methods

We too often blur God's methods by wrong methods; we fail when we ought to be succeeding. Our efforts at "raising money," often meet with deserved failure because the methods are wrong and the harder we work them the more obscure the divine principle, and the more harm we do the people.

"Anything that tends to obscure the idea of the first and best to God must be aban-

doned. All chicanery for raising money for God's cause, whether by fair and festival, the oyster supper, the pink tea or the 'possum roast, the weighing social or kissing bee, are a scandal upon the Christian religion and a fetid nuisance in the nostrils of even unregenerate man. Churches that resort to them deserve to flounder and fail in money matters, as many of them do. Is there no better way, no diviner plan? Has our loving Father, who is a God of power and order, placed the support of His cause to rest upon such miserable makeshifts as these? We do not believe it.

There would be no seeming need, no desire for these things on the part of Christians if they were patiently and lovingly engaged in proportional giving according to the Bible measure. What spiritual joy would attend the consecration of our substance! How the credit of God's house would look up! What strength and certainty would be imparted to our missionary and other Christian enterprises! How speedy would be the evangelization of the world! Christians and churches would soon have more self-respect; pastors would be better supported; more evangelists could be put in the field; more people would be converted; churches would be built where needed; mission secretaries' brains would not have to be racked in making appeals; there would be money enough to sustain the home church and build new ones where needed; to answer the appeals that come to us for new workers in

Colorado, Dakota, Montana, Canada, Japan and Porto Rico.

"Honor the Lord with thy substance." "He that honoreth Me, him will I honor, saith the Lord."

GIVING, YET RECEIVING

"Counting your treasure God's bounty to measure,
Give, and the gift shall but add to thy store;
Fullness bestowing from love overflowing;
Thus does He give when His children implore.

Loving and living enrich thee by giving,
God will be with thee to bless thee the more;
Works thro' thy labors, relieving thy neighbors;
Gives by thy hand, to replenish thy store.

Under His guiding, bread grows by dividing,
'Mine is all thine,' can we ask Him for more?
Sharing His splendor, ourselves we surrender;
He'll not withhold when His children implore.

Good measure, pressed down, running over,
Give for God's cause, and to you shall be given;
Good measure, pressed down, running over;
Thus will you lay up your treasure in Heaven."

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